

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks to follow is respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge, with thanks, the Examiner's indication that Claims 19-22 are allowable over the art of record. Applicants also acknowledge, with thanks, the Examiner's indication that Claims 2-5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. The remaining claims, i.e., Claims 1 and 6-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,757,264 to Petit ("Petit").

In view of the above, and to expedite an allowance of the present application, applicants have amended Claims 3, 4 and 5 each to include the subject matter/features recited in Claims 1 and 2. Additionally, applicants have cancelled Claims 1 and 2, and have changed the dependency of Claims 6-12 from cancelled Claim 1 to Claim 19.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 3-12 and 19-22, as amended, are allowable over the art of record in the present application. Applicants further submit that the above amendments to the claims obviate the anticipatory rejection based on the disclosure of Petit.

In summary, applicants have amended Claims 3-12 and cancelled Claims 1 and 2 from further consideration in this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that those claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

Thus, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is firmly believed that the present case is in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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